

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 JIDDA 01815 081418Z
ACTION NEA-10

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UNCLAS JIDDA 1815

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BEXP, BBSR, SA
SUBJ: ARABIC LANGUAGE MANDATORY IN CORRESPONDENCE WITH SAG

1. ALL LOCAL PRESS FEATURED ON MARCH 6TH THE DECISION OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS TO OBLIGE ALL FOREIGN COMPANIES AND THEIR BRANCHES AND OFFICES OPERATING IN THE KINGDOM TO USE ARABIC IN CORRESPONDENCE WITH ALL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS OF THE SAG. THE COUNCILS RESOLUTION ALSO STIPULATES A FINE OF SR 10,000 (\$2900) FOR NON-COMPLIANCE. FINE WILL BE DOUBLED FOR SECOND TIME VIOLATORS AND ALL BUSINESS WILL BE SUSPENDED FOR ONE YEAR.

2. COMMENT: SAUDI GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS HAVE STIPULATED FOR SOME TIME THAT ALL OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE SAG MUST BE IN ARABIC IN ADDITION TO THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE USED. THE SAG PRE-QUALIFICATION FORMS FOR PROSPECTIVE BIDDERS FOR SUPPLY AND CONTRACTS HAVE IN THE PAST BEEN IN ARABIC AND ENGLISH. THIS WILL BE MAINTAINED. NEVERTHELESS, LETTERS, TELEXES AND CABLES TO THE SAG MUST ALWAYS BE IN ARABIC. THIS IS FIRST INSTANCE OF ANY FINE PENALTIES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE. FAILURE TO INCLUDE AN ARABIC TRANSLATION, HOWEVER, IN ANY CORRESPONDENCE WILL RESULT IN NO REPLY AND EXCLUSION FROM CONSIDERATION FOR THE TIME INDICATED. ALTHOUGH ONLY FIRMS BASED IN THE KINGDOM ARE AFFECTED, IT IS UNCLASSIFIED

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WORTHY TO NOTE THAT CORRESPONDENCE FROM ABROAD IS RARELY CONSIDERED UNLESS IN THE ARABIC LANGUAGE. ALSO EVEN U.S. EDUCATED AND FLUENT ENGLISH SPEAKING SAUDI OFFICIALS FIND IT DIFFICULT TO POUR THROUGH AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LETTER AND PREFER RECEIVING CORRESPONDENCE IN ARABIC WHICH GETS FIRST ATTENTION. U.S. FIRMS SHOULD TAKE NOTE.
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Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Event:
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